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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

IN RE APPLICATION OF: NEIL ROSEMAN *ET AL.*

APPLICATION No.: 09/280,292

FILED: MARCH 29, 1999

FOR: **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR
AUTHENTICATING USERS WHEN
CONDUCTING COMMERCIAL
TRANSACTIONS USING A COMPUTER**

EXAMINER: RICHARD C. WEISBERGER

ART UNIT: 3624

CONF. No: 5547

APPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop: Appeal Brief – Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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GROUP 3600

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Amazon.com, Inc.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Applicants, applicants' legal representative, and the real party in interest are unaware of any appeal or interference that will directly affect, be directly affected by, or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the present appeal.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 29-139 are pending in the present application.¹ Claims 29-43, 60-70 and 86-121 have been withdrawn in response to a Restriction Requirement. Claims 44-59, 71-85 and 122-139 are the subject of this appeal.

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¹ Appendix A includes a copy of the claims.

Claims 44-59, 71-85 and 122-139 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,835,896 to Fisher et al. ("Fisher").²

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

Applicants have not filed any amendments subsequent to the last Office Action mailed December 2, 2003.

V. SUMMARY OF INVENTION

Applicants' invention is generally related to methods and systems for conducting auctions using a computer system. More specifically, applicants' techniques facilitate the placing of a bid at an auction. (Specification, 7:14-16.) For example, one technique displays a description of an item and requests a user to place a bid. (Specification, 7:20-21.) When the user requests to submit a bid by, for example, clicking a button that is associated with a bid amount, the technique sends the request to an auction system. (Specification, 8:1-4.) The request may include automatic authentication information (e.g., cookie information) identifying the user. (Specification, 8:4-7 and 12-14.) When the auction system receives the request, it determines whether the user can be authenticated (e.g., based on the cookie information). (Specification, 8:4-6.) If so, then the bid is placed on behalf of the user. (Specification, 8:5-7.) If not, the auction system then requests manual authentication information from the user. (Specification, 8:22-23.) When the auction system receives the manual authentication information, it places the bid on behalf of the user. (Specification, 9:16-18.)

This technique simplifies the bidding process for users who are registered to place bids and, consequently, do not need to enter authentication information. The technique also defers the entry of authentication information for users who are not registered until after the user requests to place a bid. (Specification, 9:12-16.) An unregistered user who requests to place a bid and then, for example, is told that his or her bid will be the highest may be more likely to then provide his or her authentication

² Because the Office Action Summary lists claims 44-59, 71-85 and 122-139 as being rejected, applicants assume these claims are rejected under Fisher even though many of these claims are not mentioned in the Office Action.

information, than an unregistered user who is required to provide his or her authentication information before or at the same time a bid is placed. (Specification, 9:18-24.) The deferral of authentication also allows the same user interface to be used when a user requests to place a bid regardless of whether or not the user is registered. (Specification, 9:4-7.)

In one embodiment of the applicants' technology, an auction system receives from a user a request to submit a bid for an item. (Specification, 8:1-4.) When the received request includes automatic authentication information, the system automatically authenticates the user based on the automatic authentication information. (Specification, 8:4-8.) The automatic authentication information can include a cookie or other data stored on the user's computer. (Specification, 8:12-14.) When the user can be automatically authenticated, the system places the bid on behalf of the user. (Specification, 8:6-7.) When the user cannot be automatically authenticated, the system manually authenticates the user. (Specification, 9:12-16.) Manual authentication can include sending to the user a display description requesting authentication information, receiving from the user authentication information (e.g., home address, phone number, credit card number, password), and determining whether the user can be authenticated based on the received authentication information. (Specification, 9:12-18; 19:15-17.) As such, if manual authentication is required, the user is manually authenticated after the user submits the bid for the item. (Specification, 9:12-16.) When the user can be manually authenticated, the bid is placed on behalf of the user. (Specification, 9:16-18.)

In one aspect of this embodiment, the auction system determines whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user. (Specification, 9:12-16.) In another aspect of this embodiment, the manual authentication expires after a fixed time. (Specification, 15:8-9.) As such, before the time expires, a subsequent bid can be placed on behalf of the user using semi-automatic authentication (i.e., automatic authentication during a certain period after manual authentication). (Specification, 8:23-9:2.) In another aspect of this embodiment, the system sends to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item. (Specification, 7:19-21.) The display description does not include a request for

manual authentication information and is sent before the system receives from the user a request to submit a bid for the item. (Specification, 7:19-8:1.)

VI. SUMMARY OF FISHER

Fisher discloses a method for conducting an auction on an electronic network, such as the Internet. (Fisher, 7:8-11.) Potential customers are presented with merchandise catalogue pages, which contain a bid button. (Fisher, 7:32-38.) "By pressing bid button 1 in FIG. 2, the customer is presented with a bid form such as the one shown in FIG. 3. The customer fills out the required information in the bid form and presses 'Place Bid' button 2 to send the bid to the electronic auction system for processing." (Fisher, 7:42-46.) If the customer does not have an account number, the customer is required to enter on the bid form the customer's name, shipping address, email address, phone number, fax number, credit card information, and bid. (Fisher, Figure 3.) If the customer has an account number, the customer is required to enter on the bid form the customer's first name, account number, and bid. (Fisher, Figure 3.) Accordingly, in either case, the customer is required to enter personal identification information with a bid.

After the customer manually enters the required personal identification information, the "[b]id validator 21 examines the bid information entered by the customer on bid form 20 to ensure that the bid is properly formatted, all necessary data is present, and the data values entered look credible. Exemplary functions of bid validator 21 include verifying credit card information entered by the customer, checking that a complete name and shipping address has [sic] been entered, that the proper state abbreviation and zip code have been entered, that an appropriate bid amount has been entered, and that a telephone or facsimile number has been entered. Once the bid information has been validated, the bid validator 21 places the bid in bid database 31." (Fisher, 7:54-65.) Accordingly, the bid validator determines whether the bid is valid after the customer manually enters the required personal identification information.

VII. ISSUES

A. Has the Examiner failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness by failing to explain what in Fisher corresponds to the claimed elements and why any difference would be obvious?

B. Does Fisher fail to disclose or suggest automatically authenticating the user when the request to submit a bid includes automatic authentication information and manually authenticating the user when the user cannot be automatically authenticated?

C. Does Fisher fail to disclose or suggest determining whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user?

D. Does Fisher fail to disclose or suggest before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item, wherein the sent display description does not include a request for manual authentication information?

VIII. GROUPING OF CLAIMS³

Table 1 illustrates the grouping of claims that stand or fall together. The “Issues” column identifies the issues that relate to each grouping. Even though some of the groups have the same set of issues (e.g., the group including claim 44 and the group including claim 71 both relate to issues A and B), they are grouped separately because the claims use different language relating to the issues.

Table 1

Claims	Issues
44-47, 49-58, 139	A, B
48	A, B, C
59	A, B, D

³ Applicants have grouped the claims to simplify the issues on appeal. Applicants, however, do not concede that the claims in any group stand or fall together for purposes other than this appeal. In particular, applicants reserve the right to argue the patentability of each claim separately in a subsequent action, such as reopened prosecution or litigation.

71-73, 75-84	A, B
74	A, B, C
85	A, B, D
122-125, 127-134, 136-138	A, B
126	A, B, C
135	A, B, D

IX. ARGUMENTS

A. The Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness by failing to explain what in Fisher corresponds to the claimed elements and why any difference would be obvious.

"[T]he examiner bears the initial burden of presenting a *prima facie* case of obviousness." *In re Rijckaert*, 9 F.3d 1531, 1532 (Fed. Cir. 1993). To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the Examiner needs to (a) identify prior art references that disclose all the elements of the claims, and (b) provide a suggestion or motivation to modify the references to produce the claimed invention. (MPEP § 2143.) Moreover, the Examiner must "identify wherein each and every facet of the claimed invention is disclosed in the applied reference." *Ex parte Levy*, 17 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1461, 1462 (Bd. Pat. App. & Interf. 1990). For the reasons described below, the Examiner has failed to satisfy his burden of presenting a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

In the Office Action dated December 2, 2003, the Examiner stated the following in rejecting claim 44:

Fisher teaches a computer implemented algorithm for participating in an auction system, the method comprising a bid for the item (Figure 5:41) when the received request includes automatic authentication information, automatically authenticating the user based on the automatic authentication information, when the user can be automatically authenticated, placing the bid on behalf of the user, and when the user cannot be automatically authenticated, manually authenticating the user; and when the user can be manually authenticated, placing the bid on behalf of the user. As to the step of receiving a request to bid prior to the bidding process, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to have adopted the online auction system of Fisher including step for receiving a request from a user to submit a bid as motivated by the need to qualify buyers prior to a date specified auction, as it is routine in the art of auctioning to prescreen bidders. A request that includes automatic authentication information from a cookie stored on a computer of the user is well known and would have

been obvious for one skilled in the art to adopt to increase the speed of the transaction (See, Applicant's spec, page 4:19-25). The prior art does not expressly teach the step of receiving a request to submit a bid.

(Pages 2-3.)

As to the paragraph quoted above, the Examiner fails to explicitly point out and identify features in Fisher that correspond to the elements of claim 44. To the contrary, in rejecting claim 44, the Examiner merely paraphrases claim 44. The only specific section of Fisher that the Examiner mentions is "Figure 5:41." Specifically, Examiner states, "a bid for the item (Figure 5:41) when the received request includes automatic authentication information." (Office Action, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 2.) Applicants assume that the Examiner is referring to reference number 41 in Figure 5 of Fisher, but it is unclear how the box 41 of Figure 5 relates to what the Examiner has said. Furthermore, in rejecting claim 44 and the other claims in the Office Action, the Examiner does not explicitly mention which claim he is discussing. Applicants are left to guess which claims have been discussed and rejected.

Moreover, it appears the Examiner has misunderstood the language "receiving from a user a request to submit a bid for the item," recited in claim 44. The Examiner states, "As to the step of receiving a request to bid prior to the bidding process, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to have adopted the online auction system of Fisher including step for receiving a request from a user to submit a bid as motivated by the need to qualify buyers prior to a date specified auction, as it is routine in the art of auctioning to prescreen bidders." (Office Action, Dec. 2, 2003, pp. 2-3.) It is unclear why the Examiner discusses "the need to qualify buyers prior to a date specified auction" and "prescreen[ing] bidders." Claim 44 is not directed to qualifying buyers prior to an auction. In claim 44, the "request" includes "a bid" submitted by the user, which is "plac[ed] . . . on behalf of the user" after the user is authenticated.

The Examiner further fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness by failing to provide a sufficient motivation for modifying Fisher's method to include the additional features of several dependent claims. For example, claim 54 (and similar claims 80 and 131) recites, "The method of claim 44 wherein the manual authentication expires after a fixed time." In rejecting what the applicants presume is claim 54, the

Examiner states, "Moreover, the method of claim 44 wherein the manual authentication expires after a fixed time is obvious to those skilled in the art as motivated by the need to inactivate inactive accounts." (Office Action, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 4.) Applicants are puzzled as to why the Examiner believes one skilled in the art would be motivated to inactivate an inactive account. If an account is inactive, why does it need to be inactivated? Furthermore, claim 53 (and similar claim 79) recites, "The method of claim 44 wherein manual authentication includes sending to the user a display description requesting authentication information, receiving from the user authentication information, and determining whether the user can be authenticated based on the received authentication information." In rejecting what the applicants presume is claim 53, the Examiner states, "Moreover, the method of claim 44 wherein after manual authentication of the user, a subsequent bid is placed on behalf of the user using semiautomatic authentication (interpreted as broadly as possible includes graphical user assistance inherent in Figure 5[])." (Office Action, Dec. 2, 2003, p. 4.) It is unclear what the Examiner means and how graphical user assistance is related to Figure 5 or the language of claim 53. Accordingly, the Examiner fails to provide a sufficient motivation for modifying Fisher's method to include the additional features of several dependent claims.

If a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established, "then without more the applicant is entitled to grant of the patent." *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445 (Fed. Cir. 1992). The Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of unpatentability of any of the pending claims because the Examiner has failed to (a) identify prior art references that disclose all the features of the claims, (b) provide a motivation to modify the references to produce the claimed invention, and (c) point out features in the references that correspond to the elements in the claims.

B. Fisher fails to disclose or suggest automatically authenticating the user when the request to submit a bid includes automatic authentication information and manually authenticating the user when the user cannot be automatically authenticated.

Claims 44-59, 71-85 and 122-139 are directed to methods that include automatically authenticating the user when the request to submit a bid (e.g., submission

of a proposed bid by a user) includes automatic authentication information. For example, claim 44 recites, "when the received request includes automatic authentication information, automatically authenticating the user based on the automatic authentication information." Fisher does not disclose or suggest automatic authentication. To the contrary, Fisher discloses manual authentication in which a user manually enters personal identification information with a bid. More specifically, in order to submit a bid, Fisher's method requires a user without an account to manually enter his or her name, shipping address, email address, phone number, fax number, and credit card information. If the user already has an account, the user must manually enter the account number and his or her first name. Accordingly, Fisher fails to disclose or suggest automatic authentication.

The methods of claims 44-59, 71-85 and 122-139 further include manually authenticating the user after receiving a request to submit a bid if the user cannot be automatically authenticated based on the request to submit a bid. Claim 71, for example, recites "automatically authenticating the user based on the received request, [and] when the user cannot be automatically authenticated, manually authenticating the user." Claim 122 recites, "when the user cannot be authenticated based on authentication information of the received request, sending a request to the user to provide authentication information, receiving the authentication information provided by the user as requested, [and] attempting to authenticate the user based on the authentication information provided by the user." Fisher does not disclose or suggest manually authenticating the user after receiving a request to submit a bid. To the contrary, Fisher discloses receiving a request to submit a bid with manual authentication information. Accordingly, Fisher fails to disclose or suggest manually authenticating the user after receiving a request to submit a bid if the user cannot be automatically authenticated based on the request to submit a bid.

Moreover, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify Fisher's method to include the claimed features. For example, assuming for the sake of argument that the Examiner is correct that "[a] request that includes automatic authentication information from a cookie stored on a computer of the user is well known and would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to adopt to increase the speed of the

transaction" (Office Action, December 2, 2003, p. 3), such a modification of Fisher's method would still not include the claimed features. More specifically, if Fisher's method were combined with cookie technology and if a cookie were not available, the user would be required to provide manual authentication information with the bid. As such, the modified method would not manually authenticate the user after receiving a request to submit a bid if the user could not be automatically authenticated based on the request to submit a bid. Therefore, one skilled in the art would not be motivated to modify Fisher's method to include the claimed features.

C. Fisher fails to disclose or suggest determining whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user.

Claims 48, 74 and 126 are directed to determining whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user. As described above, Fisher's method requires a user to enter manual authentication information with the bid. After the user submits the manual authentication information and the bid, the "[b]id validator 21 examines the bid information entered by the customer on bid form 20 to ensure that the bid is properly formatted, all necessary data is present, and the data values entered look credible." (Fisher, 7:54-57.) Accordingly, Fisher does not disclose or suggest determining whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user.

D. Fisher fails to disclose or suggest before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item, wherein the sent display description does not include a request for manual authentication information.

Claims 59, 85 and 135 are directed to before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item (e.g., a bid submission display). The sent display description does not include a request for manual authentication information. As described above, Fisher's bid form illustrated in Figure 3 includes a request for manual authentication information. Accordingly, Fisher fails to disclose or suggest before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for

requesting to submit a bid for the item, wherein the sent display description does not include a request for manual authentication information.

IV. CONCLUSION

As discussed above, the Examiner has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for any of the claims. Even assuming that a *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established, applicants have demonstrated that the following features of the claims are not rendered obvious:

(1) automatically authenticating the user when the request to submit a bid includes automatic authentication information and manually authenticating the user when the user cannot be automatically authenticated;

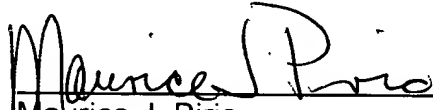
(2) determining whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user; and

(3) before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item, wherein the sent display description does not include a request for manual authentication information.

Because each of applicants' claims recites at least one or more of these elements, none of the claims is obvious. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request reversal of the Examiner's rejections.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appl. No. 09/280,867

APPENDIX A
PENDING CLAIMS

1-28. (Canceled)

29-43. (Withdrawn)

44. (Previously presented) A method in an auction system for bidding on an item being auctioned, the method comprising:

receiving from a user a request to submit a bid for the item;

when the received request includes automatic authentication information, automatically authenticating the user based on the automatic authentication information;

when the user can be automatically authenticated, placing the bid on behalf of the user; and

when the user cannot be automatically authenticated,

manually authenticating the user; and

when the user can be manually authenticated, placing the bid on behalf of the user.

45. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the received request includes automatic authentication information from a cookie stored on a computer of the user.

46. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein automatically authenticating the user based on the received automatic authentication information includes:

extracting a user identifier from the received request; and

determining whether the user identifier identifies a registered user.

47. (Previously presented) The method of claim 46 including determining whether the user identified by the user identifier is authorized to submit bids.

48. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 including determining whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 including when the user cannot be manually authenticated, registering the user.

50. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 including before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid at a suggested bid amount for the item.

51. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 including before placing a bid on behalf of the user, sending to the user a display description requesting confirmation to place the bid.

52. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein manual authentication includes sending to the user a display description requesting authentication information, receiving from the user authentication information, and determining whether the user can be authenticated based on the received authentication information.

53. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein after manual authentication of the user, a subsequent bid is place on behalf of the user using semi-automatic authentication.

54. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the manual authentication expires after a fixed time.

55. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the manual authentication expires based on when a bid was last placed by the user.

56. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the manual authentication expires based on when the user last interacted with the auction system.

57. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the manual authentication expires after a time that is determined based on the user's past interactions with the auction system.

58. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 wherein the user specifies conditions for expiration of the manual authentication.

59. (Previously presented) The method of claim 44 including before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item wherein the sent display description does not include a request for manual authentication information.

60-70. (Withdrawn)

71. (Previously presented) A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a computer system to place a bid on an item being auctioned, by a method comprising:

- receiving from a user a request to submit a bid for the item;
- automatically authenticating the user based on the received request;
- when the user cannot be automatically authenticated, manually authenticating the user; and
- after authenticating the user, placing the bid on behalf of the user.

72. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein the received request includes automatic authentication information from a cookie stored on a computer of the user.

73. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein automatically authenticating the user based on the received request includes:
extracting a user identifier from the received request; and
determining whether the user identifier identifies a registered user.

74. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 including determining whether the bid is acceptable before manually authenticating the user.

75. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 including when the user is not manually authenticated, registering the user.

76. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 including before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid at a suggested bid amount for the item.

77. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 including before placing a bid on behalf of the user, requesting from the user confirmation to place the bid.

78. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein manual authentication includes sending to the user a display description requesting authentication information, receiving from the user authentication information, and determining whether the user can be authenticated based on the received authentication information.

79. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein after manual authentication of the user, a subsequent bid is placed on behalf of the user using semi-automatic authentication.

80. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein the manual authentication expires after a fixed period.

81. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein the manual authentication expires based on when a bid was last submitted by the user.

82. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein the manual authentication expires based on when the user last interacted with the auction system.

83. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein the manual authentication expires after a time period that is determined based on the user's past interactions.

84. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 wherein the user specifies conditions for expiration of the manual authentication.

85. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium of claim 71 including before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item wherein the sent display description does not include a request for manual authentication information.

86-121. (Withdrawn)

122. (Previously presented) A method in an auction system for bidding on an item being auctioned, the method comprising:

- receiving from a user a request to submit a bid for the item;
- when the received request has authentication information, attempting to authenticate the user based on the authentication information, the authentication information of the received request being authentication information that is not entered by the user when the bid is placed;
- when the user can be authenticated based on the authentication information of the received request, placing the bid on behalf of the user; and
- when the user cannot be authenticated based on authentication information of the received request,
 - sending a request to the user to provide authentication information;
 - receiving the authentication information provided by the user as requested;
 - attempting to authenticate the user based on the authentication information provided by the user; and
 - when the user can be authenticated based on the authentication information provided by the user, placing the bid on behalf of the user.

123. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein the received request includes authentication information from a cookie stored on a computer of the user.

124. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein the attempting to authenticate the user based on the authentication information of the received request includes:

- extracting a user identifier from the received request; and
- determining whether the extracted user identifier identifies a registered user.

125. (Previously presented) The method of claim 124 including determining whether the user identified by the user identifier is authorized to submit bids.

126. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 including determining whether the bid is acceptable before sending a request to the user to provide authentication information.

127. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 including when the user can not be authenticated based on the authentication information provided by the user, registering the user.

128. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 including before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid at a suggested bid amount for the item.

129. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 including before placing a bid on behalf of the user, sending to the user a display description requesting confirmation to place the bid.

130. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein when the user can be authenticated based on the authentication information provided by the user, placing a subsequent bid on behalf of the user without the user providing additional authentication information.

131. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein when the user can be authenticated based on the authentication information provided by the user, causing the authentication to expire after a fixed time.

132. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein when the user can be authenticated based on the authentication information provided by the user, causing the authentication to expire based on when a bid was last placed by the user.

133. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein when the user can be authenticated based on the authentication information provided by the user,

causing the authentication to expire based on when the user last interacted with the auction system.

134. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein when the user can be authenticated based on the authentication information provided by the user, causing the authentication to expire after a time that is determined based on the user's past interactions with the auction system.

135. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 including before receiving from the user a request to submit a bid for the item, sending to the user a display description identifying the item to be auctioned and for requesting to submit a bid for the item wherein the sent display description does not include a request for authentication information.

136. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein when the user cannot be authenticated based on authentication information of the received request includes when the received request does not include authentication information.

137. (Previously presented) The method of claim 136 wherein when the user cannot be authenticated based on authentication information of the received request includes when the attempt to authenticate based on the included authentication information of the received request fails.

138. (Previously presented) The method of claim 122 wherein when the user cannot be authenticated based on authentication information of the received request includes when the attempt to authenticate based on the included authentication information of the received request fails.

139. (Previously presented) The method of claim 45 wherein manual authentication includes sending to the user a display description requesting authentication information, receiving from the user authentication information, and

determining whether the user can be authenticated based on the received authentication information.